









## MEXICAN OLLAPODRIDA.

**PULQUE, THE BEVERAGE INVENTED BY PAPAUZIN, A. D. 990.**

**Eighty Thousand Gallons Per Day Now Used at the Capital City "Beggars' Day" in Mexico.**

(Special Room-Union Correspondence.)

City of Mexico, May 27, 1887.

Everybody has heard of pulque, the "national beverage" in this portion of the world—the fermented milk of that species of cattle known to North Americans as the pulque plant or *Agave Americana*, here called magney. Although there are more than thirty thousand licensed pulque shops in the City of Mexico alone—besides innumerable booths, stalls and bar-rooms, where that and other beverages are dispensed—and although the popular drink costs but a penny, "the poor man's wine," as it is called, is sold in great quantities per quart, the shops and stalls are crowded with it. Very little pulque is sold at wholesale, as most Mexicans who make a business of cultivating magney maintain their own shops for retailing it. A certain well-known aristocrat of this city, who rides in his carriage and wears a monocle, and who is the magnate of the land, has five polyglots from which he is said to derive the little income of \$25,000 per annum. According to official statistics a little more than eighty thousand gallons of pulque are sold every day in the capital city, and nearly double that amount on Sunday days and Saints' days. Three special trains, laden with magney, are sent daily into the City of Mexico from the near-by plains of Apam and Ocotlán, where magney is cultivated. From these magney is sent to the capital, where it is sold at a price of from one to two cents per gallon, and the railroads carry it to the capital for the purpose of the same.

What a field is this for the temperance crusaders! But the magney is better to mind his own affairs, or to turn his attention elsewhere, for pulque is not only one of the most delicious of all beverages, but is one of the few blessings which the poor of Mexico enjoy, and which he knows and feels to be his own. Being not at all heavy in its effects, the worst abuse of the "bleeding" leaves no headache behind.

But even only to intensify the gallantry of the gaudy, making him sing and dance till the sleepy stage comes on, showing his white teeth in continual laughter and halting off his ragged coat to pass to ladies with the most respectful salutes. Two men's worth of pulque will render the poorest man as happy as a king, and five men's worth will secure him the honor of being escorted by men much higher in the social scale than himself (police) to the nearest *carril*, and an engagement to work for the Government a fortnight or so to be paid in magney the next day, with beans and tortillas provided. As may be inferred, the Government has no lack of laborers, and these easy terms, and the fact that magney is sold in the streets well paved and splendid public duties performed.

While in most climates one may imbibe considerable quantities of the usual intoxicants with comparative impunity, in these higher altitudes, where the atmosphere is smaller and so surprisingly harmful. And right here permit me to add that some unfortunate American, who fell victim to the difference between undue conviviality at the Mexican capital, really deserve commendation rather than blame, for they have been heaped upon them. In most cases they were the victims of ignorance on their own part, or of a very bad joke perpetrated by the Mexicans, who, however polite they may appear, are at heart jealous of all Americans, and will do anything to put them at a disadvantage. The same beverage which gentlemen may use socially in the North with no ill effects, if partaken here in equal measure, will make the imbiber sicker in an account, and then leave him for days in a state of utter prostration. Most foreigners learn this only by sad experience, and the "gilded youth" of the capital find great pleasure in it.

Especially if he comes in the interests of his Government. Of course my own opportunities for observing this phase of Mexican life are limited, but I can tell you by an American journalist (who certainly ought to be taken into consideration) that magney, besides, which is never safe beverage in warm countries, here is simply deadly. The Spaniards consider it a cognac, and our wines, while Mexicans of the better class have claret at their home banquets, with champagne, etc., for festive occasions. American magney, however, popular, and, in fact, are scarcely known here. The Rio Grande, the scarcity of it, makes it a rare treat. In the City of Mexico it may be procured, but as it is all brought from the Rio Grande, it is very expensive (fifteen cents per pound), but wisely concludes to dispense with it.

Strangers in Mexico are first greatly troubled with thirst, as rapid evaporation renders the mouth and throat extremely dry. Water at first seems to do no good, but all men are dangerous to indulge in than any "magney," whose effects may be slept in. When we are first introduced to the ancient Tenechitlan of the early Aztecs—has been the site of a populous city for more than three thousand years, during all that time, while empires have arisen and fallen, dynasties decayed and myriads have lived and died, the city has never been drained, but in the center, has been drained into a canal, and the water of the canal is used for the purpose of the city.

To be sure, there is the living spring of Chapultepec still brought down to the capital by that old Spanish engineer (five miles long and three hundred feet deep), but unless you live close by one of its few fountains and see the sweet, pure water taken therefrom, you will never know what you are drinking. The licensed carrier, who peddles water from door to door, is the only one who is allowed to carry a half-gallon of water (and a half), is quite as likely to have drawn it from some filthy well filled with

WASHINGTON FROM THE CAMPO SANTO. Other portions of this country are abundant in such a conglomerate of minerals and chemicals as to render the water extremely dangerous, and the traveler is warned to drink much of his water in the mountains.

But to return to our pulque. It is as amusing to note the efforts which the arriving Americans make to say the word (which should be pronounced "puk") as to see the natives who are called "pukeros" (they generally begin by calling it "puk") or at best "puk," and end by doing their share to the water of the magney, which is sold at a price of from one to two cents per gallon. In its best state this sour-smelling stuff looks like thick, buttermilk, and tastes somewhat nasty, if possible, than spoiled yeast. Its beauties were discovered about the year 1850, by one Papauzin, a Toluca gentleman. Tradition says that this ancient benefactor, having succeeded in distilling a beverage which to him seemed fit for the gods, he called his only daughter, Xocotl, the name signifying "Flower of Tollen," and commissioned her as cup-bearer to the magney. The drink which she was to serve was beautiful, and so the Toluca monarch not only drank and praised the pulque, but straightway sent for the magney, and the monarch would not permit her to return to her people, for for many years the old rascal kept her as a prisoner in his palace, and she was bloodied, and at last the disruption of the empire, grew out of his infatuation. It seems to have been a very old story, even at that early date, that "wine and women" are the moving causes of mischief.

Throughout the length and breadth of Mexico Saturday is known as "Beggars' Day," when, under the pretext of the Church and State, mendicants of all degrees and both sexes, levy demands upon people with the most unscrupulousness of their courts and lairs they swarm in incredible numbers—the blind, the halt, the lame and the lazy, and before sunrise the morning streets are crowded with them. They are filled with them. First they make a tour of the shops and markets, and the obliging merchants, in anticipation of their coming, have laid by a store of small coin for the occasion. To refuse to give would be a bad advertisement.

For among these professional mendicants are many good customers for the rest of the day. Then they go to the churches, and their ragged and crutches, and the sanctuaries; and after mass is over and the churches de-

## RAMBLES IN JAPAN.

**EXPERIENCES IN ATTENDING AN ORIENTAL MATINEE.**

**Admission Prices Which All Can Afford—An Ideal Play with the Japanese.**

(Correspondence ROOM-UNION.)

KODI MACHI, Japan, April 21, 1887.

I began to know what a real matinee is like when I got up at 6 A. M. in the very dim light of an April morning to start for the theater. It is easy enough to make what is called a "night of it" for one is apt to drift right along into the wee hours without being aware of it, but to deliberately set out to make a day of it requires more exertion than I will often desire to make, even for the privilege of seeing a good play, which lasts from 8 A. M. to 8 P. M. Taking my usual breakfast of milk, bread and eggs, at the tiny shop which I go each morning, I doubled the quantity of provender, that I might if necessary stand a twelve hours' tussle with amusement. The world is full of what some Mrs. Malaprop has called "pleasure exertions," and I felt the great truth of the expression as I buttoned my waistcoat over my breakfast and trotted away. A Japanese never seems to know anything without asking somebody first, and ten to one he learns nothing more for his question. The Japanese mind is not so quick to have all in readiness, and having

STAYED FULL THREE DAYS IN INQUIRIES Among his acquaintances, met me on my arrival with the information that the play which I had intended to see, was, as he had been first informed, a very bad preparation, I was two hours late; but, remembering a comforting proverb, I hurried away, and the theater building near the University, I arrived at the theater, and my friend making due inquiries of a tea-house woman, we learned that the play was to be opened in about ten days. By this time I was very tired, and my friend, and had to leave myself by going to the museum to see the ancient paintings of the Mikados, and give up the theater for that day, and then, as my mind not to depend again upon a native for information. Hearing of a theater which I just opened not far from the Imperial Palace in Kod Machi, I went and started the night before and stayed at the house of an American friend, to avoid the trouble of finding a hotel, and to see the play was to begin at 8 A. M.

THEATRE APPOINTMENTS. At the proper hour we go down a street lined with tea-houses, and, stopping at one, from which, after drinking a cup of tea, we are escorted to the theater, where, bearing two mats and two cushions. The mats and cushions are placed in our bare box, and we sit down in Japanese fashion. The building is very large, and the stage is large, and from it run two walks across the room to the dressing-rooms. These walks are on a level with the stage, and are separated from the stage by a low railing, upon which the people walk. The audience is seated in a large hall, and the stage is large, and from it run two walks across the room to the dressing-rooms. These walks are on a level with the stage, and are separated from the stage by a low railing, upon which the people walk. The audience is seated in a large hall, and the stage is large, and from it run two walks across the room to the dressing-rooms. 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